

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 07200 041105Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4359
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7200

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IT, PINT
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PSI SECRETARY CRAXI

1. I HAD AN INITIAL MEETING TODAY WITH PSI SECRETARY
BETTINO CRAXI. HE LIVES UP TO HIS BILLING AS AN
ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT, YOUNG PARTY LEADER WHO IS
PASSIONATELY INTERESTED IN AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT
THE POLITICS OF ITALY BUT SOMEWHAT UNINFORMED AND
NAIVE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. HE RECEIVED ME
CORDIALLY AND WE HAD AN INTERESTING 1 1/2 HOUR DISCUSSION,
MOSTLY ABOUT ITALIAN POLITICS AND SOCIETY.

2. SINCE CRAXI HAD SAID THAT HE HAD READ CLOSELY
MY SPEECH TO THE NATO WAR COLLEGE ON THE CARTER
ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN POLICY, I BEGAN OUR DISCUS-
SION WITH A CLEAR AND DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF U.S.
ATTITUDES AND POLICY TOWARD ITALY AND, IN PARTICULAR,
TOWARD THE PCI. I ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT THE U. S. WOULD
LOOK WITH FAVOR ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROGRESSIVE
AND DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE LEFT SUCH AS THE PSI
COULD BE. IN THIS DISCUSSION, I EMPHASIZED THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 07200 041105Z

IMPORTANCE FOR THE SOCIALISTS IN PARTICULAR AND THE
NON-COMMUNIST LEFT IN GENERAL TO BEHAVE IN A RESPON-
SIBLE WAY AND TO PURSUE POLICIES THAT WOULD KEEP
ITALY IN THE MAINSTREAM OF WESTERN DEMOCRATIC AND
ECONOMIC LIFE. I ALSO TOOK THE OCCASION TO EXPRESS OUR
CONCERN ABOUT SOME OF THE IRRESPONSIBLE THINGS THAT ARE
SAID IN THE NAME OF THE PSI BOTH IN TERMS OF ITALIAN

ECONOMIC POLICY, NEUTRALISM, AND ANTI-AMERICANISM.

3. IN RESPONSE, CRAXI MADE A NUMBER OF COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS ABOUT PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE POLICIES OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. HE SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION WOULD SIGNAL A REBIRTH OF AMERICA'S MORAL LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD WHICH, HE SAID, HAD SUFFERED TERRIBLY DURING THE 60'S AND EARLY 70'S BECAUSE OF VIET-NAM AND WATERGATE. AMERICA'S POLICIES DURING THAT ERA HAD CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY IN HIS VIEW TO THE ALIENATION OF MUCH OF WESTERN EUROPE'S (AND ITALY'S) YOUTH. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE PARTICULARLY MENTIONED CHILE WHICH, HE SAYS, HAS BECOME A SYMBOL HERE ALMOST AS IMPORTANT AS VIET-NAM USED TO BE AND COMMENTED THAT IT REPRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO TAKE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN RECAPTURING THE MORAL LEADER-SHIP OF THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD.

4. WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO THE SOCIALIST PARTY CRAXI ASSERTED, WITH UNUSUAL FIRMNESS, THAT HE HAS A SOLID MAJORITY IN THE DIRECTORATE AND IN THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS OF THE PARTY. HE SAYS HE HAS NO OPEN OPPOSITION AND THAT HE BELIEVES THAT HE CAN LEAD THE PARTY IN THE DIRECTION HE WANTS. NEVERTHELESS, HE CLEARLY DOES NOT DELUDE HIMSELF THAT EVERYONE IN THE PARTY IS OF THE SAME MIND ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, THAT WHILE IN YEARS PAST THERE WERE A NUMBER OF FILO-SOVIETS IN THE PARTY, THESE NO LONGER EXIST, BUT THERE ARE THOSE WHO TEND TOWARD NEUTRALISM OR

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 07200 041105Z

THIRD WORLDISM AND OTHERS WHO WOULD LIKE TO PROMOTE A UNITED EUROPE INDEPENDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. WHILE THESE TENDENCIES EXIST, HE SAID, THEY DO NOT REPRESENT A MAJORITY IN THE PARTY.

5. WITH REGARD TO THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION, CRAXI SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE PRESENT INSTABILITY WOULD LAST FOR A CONSIDERABLE PERIOD OF TIME, PROBABLY AT LEAST UNTIL THE ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC. (LEONE'S TERM EXPIRES DECEMBER 1978.) WHILE HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT WILL LAST THAT LONG, HE SAID THAT SOMETHING VERY MUCH LIKE IT WILL TAKE ITS PLACE AND THAT THE PRESENT POLITICAL STALEMATE AND INSTABILITY WILL CONTINUE. HE SAID BLUNTLY THAT THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE WILL NOT HAPPEN BECAUSE THE "CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ELECTORATE" DOES NOT WANT IT.

6. CRAXI CHARACTERIZED THE PCI AS BEING IN TROUBLE,

IN PART AS A DIRECT RESULT OF PRESSURE FROM THE SOVIET UNION WHICH FEARS THAT IT IS MOVING TOO RAPIDLY AWAY FROM MOSCOW'S LEADERSHIP. IN PART, ALSO, THE PCI IS IN TROUBLE BECAUSE IT HAS LOST THE SUPPORT OF THE YOUNG WHOM THEY NURTURED ON PROMISES OF A REVOLUTION WHICH THE PARTY NO LONGER WISHES TO PURSUE AND CANNOT DELIVER. IN SPEAKING OF YOUTH, CRAXI REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN (AND OTHER) CULTURAL PROGRAMS AIMED AT ITALIAN YOUTH, AN INCREASINGLY LARGE PROPORTION OF WHICH IS ESTRANGED FROM THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF WESTERN CULTURE AND SOCIETY.

7. REFERRING TO THE CURRENT WAVE OF VIOLENCE IN ITALY, CRAXI EXPRESSED THE CONVICTION THAT MUCH OF IT IS STIMULATED BY ONE OR MORE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES FROM EASTERN EUROPE. LIKE OTHERS, HE HAS HEARD THAT IT IS PROBABLY THE CZECHS AND, WHILE HE IS UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ROME 07200 041105Z

TRUTH OF THAT, HE SEEMED FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT SOME EXTERNAL ORGANIZATION IS BEHIND A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE DISTURBANCES.

8. WE HAD A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF A POSSIBLE CRAXI VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. HE QUICKLY ACCEPTED MY SUGGESTION THAT THOUGHT BE GIVEN TO A VISIT THIS FALL (SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER) RATHER THAN THIS SUMMER, AS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN DISCUSSED. HE ALSO EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE POSSIBILITY OF A GROUP OF 1 VISITING THE U.S. THIS SUMMER (PROBABLY JULY) UNDER THE IVP. GARDNER

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